

**Leadership Cy-Fair
Questions from November 16, 2009**

- Q. Are we going to be focusing on ISC administrative costs at a later meeting?**
- A.** The December agenda includes information about music and athletics, non-required courses, substitutes, optional homestead exemption and tax rollback elections. Information regarding administration and non-teaching professional costs at both the school level and support facility level will be provided at the January meeting.
- Q. Have we seen a reduction in numbers of kids taking original credit in summer school with the increase in classes from six to seven periods per day? If there is a decrease, how will this affect the budget with less students taking original credit – so more students taking makeup? Will cost increase per student?**
- A.** During the 2009 summer session 812 middle school students took original credit courses. That number reflects a small decrease of 78 students over the 2008 summer session. During the 2009 summer session 927 high school students took original credit courses, a significant decrease from the 1,982 courses taken in the 2008 summer school year. Fewer students taking original credit courses will not impact the summer school budget because fewer teachers will be hired to teach summer school. There is no correlation between fewer students taking original credit courses and those taking make-up credit courses. Both original and make-up credit courses have the same tuition. We do not offer original credit or make-up credit courses unless we meet the minimum number of students required to offer a summer course.
- Q. Energy – Have we placed a value on our electricity usage? When we go out for RFP, have we considered being open to the idea of being an advertiser for the winning bidder? In other words, put some additional teeth in the RFP. Similar to how TAMU handles their wireless contract. Verizon makes them a very aggressive deal and in return, this allows them to advertise as “the official wireless provider for TAMU.”**
- A.** We are currently developing an advertising strategy for the district. Because we are in the process of negotiating the energy contract we determined that we should wait to evaluate the revenue options related to additional advertising before we connect advertising to the energy contract. At the current time, the district is advertising only on the district scoreboards and buses.
- Q. Berry Center Savings- What notification do we give the parents as to savings for graduations and prom events?**
- A.** We have shared this information with various groups, but not specifically with the parents of graduates or seniors whose schools have their proms at the Berry Center. We will include this information in our campus communication initiatives related to the Berry Center.
- Q. How about a town hall meeting at the Berry Center promoting the benefits of the center? This could be open to anyone with an interest in the district. Dr. Anthony and key employees could make a speech and take questions from the community.**
- A.** We will consider scheduling such an event and will initiate a more focused education/communication strategy related to the Berry Center.

Q. Can we promote the Berry Center for other uses – weddings, Christmas parties – thus making more money?

A. Yes, we can and do promote the Berry Center for non-district events. These are scheduled after the district needs are met. For the 2008-2009 school year, the Berry Center's event ratio was 65% district clients and 35% outside rental clients.

With a very limited marketing budget, we actively promote the facility through listings in national and local publications and by attending trade shows (Cy-Fair Chamber Expo and the Houston Bridal Extravaganza). The Berry Center has hosted weddings and receptions, corporate meetings, anniversary and birthday parties (for ages ranging from 90 to Sweet 16). However, it is important to note that our ability to book class reunions, Christmas parties and wedding receptions has been limited because we do not allow alcohol to be consumed on the premises.

Q. For outside events at Berry Center, do we charge for parking?

A. If an outside event is charging an admission, it is our policy to charge for Berry Center parking. Because there are often multiple events occurring at the Berry Center at the same time with some of the events being school events/events without admission (i.e., banquets or meetings), the parking fee is often added to the ticket price or service charge for the ticketed admission event. This way, the Berry Center receives money for parking; however, we avoid the confusion and expense of taking in parking fees for some cars and not for other cars.

Q. Can the bulk purchasing be done about SRC be accomplished by other purchasing office and continue to keep savings maximized?

A. Bulk purchasing could possibly be done by another department; however, this process involves the following:

1. matching the ordering time to the scope and sequence of when it will be used in the curriculum;
2. placing the order;
3. once the order arrives, separating the order by the number of students each schools has (some live specimens must be refrigerated or stored at a certain temperature);
4. informing/training the schools on how to use the specimens/material; and
5. Material is delivered or picked up by schools. Some of the bulk material ordered is for the kits. The kits would need to be created. We have estimated a cost of \$272,295 for science material and equipment if each school ordered their own as compared to \$16,575 by ordering in bulk or creating the material at the SRC (ex. Fossil cakes for 2nd grade are made at SRC at a cost of \$0.14 per child as compared to purchasing each fossil for \$6.66 per student).

Q. What is the net cost of the SRC including savings they generate?

A. All of the science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) may be taught in the science classroom, however, hands-on science experiences provided through the SRC have contributed to the 90% passing rate on the 5th grade science TAKS. Although most districts do not have an SRC, many do provide science hands-on experiences via field trips in order for students to master the science TEKS.

Several years ago in an attempt to reduce the budget, the district reduced the number of elementary out-of-district field trips to one per grade level. At that time, the SRC science experiences for K-2nd grade were developed and made available to our elementary schools. These experiences are directly tied to the TEKS for each grade level. If we eliminated the K-2nd grade science experiences to the SRC and 3rd and 5th grade science experiences to the Nature Trails (part of the SRC), similar out-of-district experiences would cost approximately \$308,096.

SRC Field Trip	Grade Level	Comparable Out-of-district field trip	Price per student for Out-of-district field trips	Number of Students in District	Transportation cost (based on average cost per bus per trip)	Total Cost to District
Animal Odyssey	Kindergarten	Houston Zoo	\$5.00	7,739	\$24,800	\$63,495
Gulf Mysteries	First	Moody Gardens	\$7.95	8,170	\$57,050	\$122,001
EcoAdventures	Second	Houston Museum of Natural Science	\$2.50	7,941	\$25,440	\$45,292
Nature Trails Simple Machines	Third	Children's Museum of Houston	\$4.00	7,967	\$25,440	\$57,308
Nature Trails	Fifth	Mercer Arboretum	\$0.00	7,982	\$20,000	\$20,000
						\$308,096.00

Savings generated by SRC - \$272,295 (low estimate for bulk material and equipment) + \$308,096. (field trips) = \$ 580,391

\$458,793 (estimated cost of SRC) – \$580,391 (estimated savings) = -121,598

The savings outweigh the costs of the SRC.

Q. ROPES- How much revenue does ROPES generate annually?

A. The Ropes program generates approximately \$39,000 annually.

Q. What percentage of secondary field trips is paid for out of general operations?

A. All of the costs for secondary field trips are paid for out of the general operating budget.

Q. DARE—Can we show tangible benefits of DARE?

A. Due to the lack of national or local data to document the effectiveness of the DARE program, the district is reviewing options for more effectiveness of the Title IV funds.

Q. Could we up the ROPES camp fees to keep the program?

A. This could certainly be taken into consideration; however, an increase in the camp fee may result in a loss of participants.

Q. Can lower level school libraries be handled by paraprofessionals?

A. We are not required by law to have a certified librarian at each elementary school. Librarians are required to hold a masters degree in library science or information services, have State certification in Learning Resources or as School Librarian, and have at least 2 years successful classroom teaching experience. Librarians bring a vast amount of knowledge, experience, and expertise to provide a robust library program.

The new language arts TEKS have a significant research strand beginning in kindergarten through 12th grade. Librarians lead students and teachers in finding, evaluating, navigating, and managing diverse electronic and traditional resources (a.k.a. information literacy). They assist students in large groups and individually on the research process and creating the final product.

Librarians collaborate with teachers extensively. Teachers ask librarians to provide resources based on specific learning objectives. For example, a teacher may ask the librarian to provide books and electronic resources to teach different literary terms, genres, science concepts, or historical periods. Also, a teacher may ask the librarian to teach his/her class on the research method or citing resources. In book talks, the librarian shares books, e-books, and online resources, and guides discussion aligned to the classroom scope and sequence.

Librarians develop the entire collection. They base their purchasing decisions on the current collection's accuracy, student appeal, the TEKS, age-appropriateness, topics of student interest, and format (print vs. electronic). Librarians must read a plethora of professional resources and seek out the best nonfiction, fiction, and formats to provide resources for the varied topics of student interest. They must anticipate the needs of the entire campus. A tool they use to develop and maintain the collection is the extremely sophisticated library software; we have a cadre of librarians serving as library software trainers and support.

Q. Need to roll maintenance costs into all programs to focus on "true" costs.

A. The costs related to utilities and grounds for ROPES, DARE, and SRC are:

- ROPEs -- \$437 electricity
- DARE -- \$5,700 electricity
- SRC -- \$31,000 electricity
- 10,000 gas
- 3,000 grounds

Q. Need to have school board members attend the LCF meetings.

A. The agenda and materials from each LCF meeting are provided to the Board members.

Q. Testing Coordinators:

- **Is there value added?**
- **Data analysis leading to corrective action?**
- **Is the function more than high level data analysis and coordination?**
- **Could the department chair operate as the testing coordinator?**
- **Can counselors be the testing coordinators?**

A. Is there value added?

The operations of the HSTC have an indirect impact on student performance. They enhance the operation of evaluation by ensuring that all teachers and students are made aware of the required tests and help guide test decision-making for students (ensure that students are evaluated with the appropriate instrument). They help ready students for high-stakes retesting (exit level retest) by making key personnel aware of remediation required by students and ensure that students are participating in the appropriate retesting programs.

Data analysis leading to corrective action?

HSTC ensure that all staff that have a need-to-know are provided data for their students. They are available to help staff locate and read reports. Many are considered part of the campus administrative team and are part of the group that digs through data to define strengths and weaknesses. They identify students that require remediation and retesting.

Is the function more than high level data analysis and coordination?

In addition to the data analysis and coordination, HSTC are chiefly responsible for monitoring the progress students make in the state assessment program required for graduation.

Could the department chair operate as the testing coordinator?

Each department chair is responsible for one content area; however, the TAKS tests cover all academic areas. Additionally, TEA requires that only one person serve as the campus coordinator. As it currently stands, the administration of TAKS, TAKS (A), TAKS-M, TAKS-Alt, and TELPAS is coordinated by one person BUT is supported by many other campus administrative staff. The demands of the test administration actually require that the entire counseling team (8), the special education dept chair and support specialist (2), Academic Achievement Specialist (1 - 2), and administrative staff (4) physically support the coordinator.

The tasks are all day long and occur before during, and after the test. Academic department chairs are also teaching and are not available for the time required.

Can counselors be the test coordinators?

Since they are in an administrative position, they are available during working hours to work the required tasks. This position, though, was generated because no counselor had enough hours in the day to complete both counselor and coordinator tasks. The counselors continue to be a physical support to the HSTC but are not available for preparation. For every test administration, the HSTC puts in 10 - 12 hours a day of preparation, works a 6 - 7 day week, and functions this way for close to two weeks. The HSTC was developed to be a support person to the counselor, the registrar, and the AAS, not the other way around.

For the following reasons it is not realistic that a counselor could serve a dual role as the testing coordinator:

1. Due to the recent cuts in counselor allocations, counselors have had to absorb the case load and duties of one less counselor within the team.
2. Counselors still organize two other major important exams....the PSAT as well as Advanced Placement exams. Both exams involve an exorbitant amount of detailed work.
3. The PSAT occurs at approximately the same time as the October TAKS re-test. Depending on the campus, this could be as many as 300 students involved in one or more parts of the re-test which impacts graduation and should have someone dedicated to making sure students are sitting for the correct part of the re-test. The PSAT involves 700-1000 students, again, depending on the campus.
4. During the same busy month of October, counselors are promoting College Night on their campus which also occurs in October.
5. The Advanced Placement exams which occurs during weeks in May, requires 2 to 3 months of preparation and could involved 300 or more students taking 500 to 1000 exams, again depending on the campus. Regardless of the numbers, the numerous steps involved in a smooth administration of the Advanced Placement exams requires "all hands on deck". Coordinating the TAKS test at the same time stretches thin a group of dedicated professionals who have already experienced a recent reduction on their teams.
6. The district recognized the detailed work involved in such important state-mandated exams and has two coordinators dedicated to TAKS-ALT and TELPAS. If these individuals are working to make sure the correct information is disseminated to campuses, campuses need to have the same type of individuals dedicated to coordinate these state-mandated exams.
7. During the coordination of all of these exams, counselors must also attend to students in crisis, parental concerns, awards night programs, dual credit deadlines, ARDS, teacher concerns, next-year's registration, SAT/ACT questions, CPS calls, mega-monitoring, seniors stressing about graduation and a myriad of other concerns. In order to be more

accessible to assist students with these academic, emotional, and social needs, the coordinating of testing should remain as it is.

Q. What are “activity funds”? Do all schools get the same amount/pupil?

A. The District has two categories of activity funds: Agency Funds and Public Funds.

Agency activity funds are those funds the district holds in a trustee capacity or as an agent/custodian for student clubs and organizations, and faculty hospitality organizations. Normally these groups have a constitution or bylaws and elect officers. Although the district is in custody of the funds, the control and expenditure authority lies with the sanctioned student or employee group. The district’s main involvement is to provide stewardship by accounting for the funds. The major sources of funds are through fund-raising for students (catalog sales, T-shirts, food sales, etc.) and dues, and faculty vending commissions for faculty hospitality organizations. Schools do not receive activity funds from the district; clubs and organizations generate the amount of activity funds.

Public activity funds are not in the custody and control of student or employee groups and are used for the general operations of the school or facility. These funds are used to promote the general welfare of each campus and the educational development and morale of all students. Funds are raised on the local campus or facility and must be used for school purposes in accordance with all rules and regulations for public funds. The major sources of funds are through fund-raising (catalog sales, T-shirts, school stores, etc.), fees (art, band, etc.), dues and student vending commissions. Again, schools are not provided activity funds, they generate the funds; therefore, the amount varies from school to school.

Q. What is the cost of the Gifted and Talented Program?

A. The Texas Education Code requires school districts to develop criteria that is approved by the Board of Trustees and meets certain State-required provisions to identify gifted and talented students. The State allotment for gifted and talented services is based on 5% of ADA which amounts to approximately \$3,132,216 in fiscal year 2009-2010. CFISD did spend more than our allocation last year as more students were identified as gifted and talented based on the identification criteria.

Q. What % of elementary students use the 1st to 5th ESL summer school?

A. The ESL/bilingual students who attend the ESL summer school program are at the beginner or intermediate level of English proficiency. The enrollment in the 2009 1st- 5th grade ESL summer program was 2,744 or 7% of the total number of elementary students.

Q. What is the guideline for how many field trips each grade can take per year (Elementary & Secondary)?

Each grade level at the elementary level may take one out-of -district field trip per year, per Board policy. Out-of-district field trips are paid by PTOs or other third party funds. Each grade level typically takes one in-district field trip per year (K-2 SRC, 3rd and 5th Nature Trails, and 4th ROPES).

At the secondary level, there is no specified number of field trips per grade level. Field trips are approved based on criteria in the rubric that was provided in the power point at the November LCF meeting.

Q. Why not get PreK & K included with the 1st to 5th ESL summer school?

A. The ESL PreK and K summer school program is a required program. The program runs at the same time as the 1st – 5th grade ESL summer school program, with an additional three days for the ESL PreK and K program to meet the time requirement set by the state. Per state requirements, there may be no more than 18 students in the PreK and K summer school classes.

Q. Can police use their resources for graffiti removal?

A. It is a district priority that graffiti be removed as quickly as possible. The use of police resources would result in a delay in the removal of the graffiti from our schools and facilities.

Q. Do you have the email addresses of band booster presidents? Next meeting is athletics & music – 1 from each school.

A. We are currently in the process of scheduling a meeting with representatives from all booster clubs. The purpose of this meeting is to provide accurate information about the budget input we have received from community members and cost information shared with the LCF committee. We are hopeful that LCF members will be able to attend this meeting, also. Given the breadth of the agenda for the Dec. 7 LCF meeting and the little time for discussion with the booster club representatives, an additional meeting seemed the best approach.

Q. What are the guidelines for outside groups renting the high school theaters? For example, a dance studio who wants to have a recital. Are these guidelines too strict?

A. Groups must meet eligibility requirements as set forth in Board Policy GKD-Local.

*Groups must be located within Cy-Fair ISD boundaries.

*Groups must show proof of 501-c-3 IRS status.

*Groups must provide the required insurance certificate.

Eligible groups (non-profit organizations) may request use of high school auditoriums for events scheduled from the weekend following the last day of school, through the 2nd weekend of July. The reasons for the limited time frame are:

- Auditoriums are often set up during the school year for school events, rehearsals, classes, and district meetings.
- Schools benefit from having flexibility to use their auditoriums whenever they are needed. Many outside organizations would want to schedule auditoriums far in advance, which would restrict school events.
- There are multiple events at high schools on any given night. Issues with parking, security, facility conflicts could interfere with those events.
- Staffing of these events (supervisors, light/sound crew) is more difficult during the school year.
- The time frames chosen seem to be of the most benefit to those community programs that historically request the facilities.
- For-profit organizations are not allowed to use the school auditoriums because of the demand from school organizations, parent support organizations (i.e., PTO and booster clubs), and during the time period allowed, non-profit organizations. For-profit organizations may rent the Berry Center at any time during the calendar year.

Q. How many assistant/associate/deputy superintendents do we have in the district? How does this compare to HISD, DISD, other large districts in the state?

A. The consultant who is currently conducting a staffing review will provide that information in a report that is expected to be completed in December or early January. The January LCF agenda will include information related to administration and support personnel costs.

Q. Cleaning services: Value added question?

▪ **How do we compare with student/teachers illness to other districts?**

At present, the latest AEIS data we have from the state for attendance is for the 2006-2007 school year. State average, 95.5%, Region average, 95.4%, CFISD average, 96.0%

▪ **How many toxic school events do we have compared to other districts?**

We have no data on toxic school events throughout the state. We have had none in CFISD.